

Interview with SEO Intern Cydney Johnson



Background: Cydney is a rising senior at Northwestern University where she is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations and Radio, Television, and Film, and minoring in Political Science. She serves as the president of the Women's Club Volleyball and has made the Dean's List. She is the co-founder of Chello, a start-up that helps musicians collaborate. Prior to her internship with Clarion, Cydney served as a financial analyst intern at Eagle Private Capital and Avante Capital Partners.

Q: What would you like your Clarion colleagues to know about you that they wouldn't find on your resume?

CJ: That would be my love of languages. I speak Spanish, and I'm currently working on improving my French skills after living in Paris for four months. I love learning languages because they give you the unique ability to connect with people on a deeper level. I'm hoping to become trilingual within the next couple of years. I want to use these abilities in the workplace to connect with people from all over the world professionally, but also personally as I would like to live abroad again at some point in my life.

Q: How did you become interested in CRE as a possible career path?

CJ: In my junior year of high school, there was an event where women professionals came in to tell us about their careers, and one speaker discussed her career in finance which first sparked my interest. The following summer, I participated in her diversity program, the Small Business Investing Scholars Program, where I was able to meet diverse professionals in the private equity industry. I then had an opportunity to intern at the speaker's company, Avante Capital Partners, a 100% women-owned fund. During that internship, I realized that I was truly interested in finance, which was not a path that I was originally planning to take as I have a nontraditional background with a more creative major. Through the SEO program, I then learned about commercial real estate, and became interested in the idea of working with more tangible assets.

Q: What sparked your interest in Clarion Partners specifically?

CJ: I was interested in Clarion for a few different reasons, one being the Firm's expertise in all the different key sectors in the industry. As someone interested in sustainability, I really liked that Clarion has a strong commitment to ESG as demonstrated through its responsible investing and portfolio decarbonization. Lastly, I knew I could leverage the team's experience and learn a lot this summer – all the professionals at Clarion are some of the best in the industry. So, I thought why not learn from the best in Los Angeles, which also happens to be my hometown.

Q: In your own words, how would you define Clarion's culture?

CJ: I would describe Clarion's culture as supportive and encouraging. Everyone on the team is extremely friendly and I feel as though I can go to anyone in the office for support on projects I am working on. I am so grateful to be interning at such a welcoming Firm.

Q: What has been your favorite aspect of the internship thus far?

CJ: My favorite part of the internship thus far has been property tours. After doing the SWOT analysis on a multifamily property, I was able to visit the asset. Being able to interact with the asset I was working on was thrilling, and I loved that I could see everyone's hard work come to life. I also recently toured an industrial warehouse and it was amazing to experience the asset I will be evaluating for my capstone project.

Q: What is your favorite book and why?

CJ: My favorite book is *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* by Milan Kundera. *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* uses five characters to determine whether lightness (meaningless joy) or heaviness (deep sadness) is more bearable. Ultimately, the book concludes that to experience true joy, one must endure true sadness. It is a great novel that one could analyze for the rest of their life and still have more to ponder.